

Carol Hanlon
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U.S. Department of Energy
Las Vegas, NV

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Dear Ms. Hanlon;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Yucca Mountain Site Evaluation. I am not an ANI member, but I feel qualified to comment due to the fact that I have been employed as a Reactor Engineer and Shift Technical Advisor for nearly twenty years at SNC's Plant E.I. Hatch. More importantly, I was privileged to receive a full tour of the Yucca site in December of 2000 and have since collected a significant volume of related literature, including scientific reports and numerous newspaper articles. I also have two little chunks of volcanic tuff, borrowed from the crest of Yucca Mountain, arranged in a miniature rock garden here in my office. I say these things to convince you that I have been deeply interested in the Project for quite some time.

My comment is very simple, and it is really only a reiteration of what was related by a DOE official who briefed my tour group (the Boiling Water Reactor Owner's Group Scram Frequency Reduction Committee) prior to our departure for the site last December. The gentleman suggested that a young, worried Mother, holding her child, could single-handedly in 30 seconds on television, negate untold thousands of man-hours of solid, scientific research.

This was an astute observation. The DOE's problem, and it is a significant one (in fact, it is the only one) is to find a way to convince Americans that both the site as well as the extraordinary precautions associated with transfer of high level radwaste thereto are SAFE. I have read everything I can find on the subject of Yucca Mountain, and I can appreciate the enormous difficulties encountered when trying to explain highly technical issues to a public that not only lacks the technical background required to comprehend the significance of the studies conducted at Yucca Mountain but who also, for whatever reason, are unwilling to fully entrust the Federal Government with their welfare and safety.

I don't have a suggested solution for what I perceive to be this key dilemma, but I feel that the DOE is going to have to do some serious thinking "outside the box" to overcome the enormous obstacle of adverse public opinion. America needs to know that we must have an ever-increasing supply of electricity if we are going to continue to grow and prosper as a Nation, and a vast population must be shown that the cleanest way to generate electricity is through nuclear fission. They need to know that the process results in spent fuel that must be stored somewhere on a permanent basis, and they need to be told in simple but convincing terms that Yucca Mountain has been proven to be the most promising storage site anywhere in the United States.

Maybe DOE should consider a national advertising campaign aimed at educating Americans, and maybe the spokesperson should be someone we all trust and respect. For example, Charlton Heston is the President of the National Rifle Association, and his positive influence on that organization and its membership is nothing short of incredulous; some say that President Bush is in office due, in part, to the NRA's efforts.

If the NRA can sway public opinion with respect to preservation of a certain Constitutional Amendment, the DOE should be able to find a way to persuade America that Yucca Mountain represents a critical American asset.

Sincerely,



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